

SENATE BILL 2843  
By Henry

AN ACT to provide for a commission to conduct a study of character education in Tennessee and to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1007.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

WHEREAS, in 1985, through the passage of Chapter 296 of the Public Acts of 1985, now codified as Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1007, Tennessee became one of the first states in the country to provide for character education in public schools; and

WHEREAS, this action was taken when the question of how to offer character, or moral education in public schools was first being discussed; and

WHEREAS, since 1985, a great deal of consideration of constitutional, legal, and ethical aspects of character education has taken place, and many states and school districts have instituted programs of character education; and

WHEREAS, it appears that the implementation of character education has not been as widespread, or as thoroughly integrated in the curriculum, as was envisioned in 1985; and

WHEREAS, the passage of a decade since enactment of this law, coupled with actions in other states, suggests that a reexamination of character education is timely; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. There is hereby created a twelve-member commission to conduct a study of character education, to be composed as follows:

- (1) Two (2) members of the house of representatives, appointed by its speaker.
- 2) Two (2) members of the senate appointed by its speaker.
- (3) The commissioner of education, or the commissioner's designee.
- (4) One (1) elementary guidance counselor, appointed by the governor on the recommendation of the commissioner of education.
- (5) One (1) high school guidance counselor, appointed by the governor on the recommendation of the commissioner of education.
- (6) One (1) county school superintendent, appointed by the governor on the recommendation of the commissioner of education.
- (7) One (1) citizen appointed by the speaker of the senate.
- (8) One (1) citizen appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.
- (9) Two (2) citizens appointed by the governor.

SECTION 2. The commission shall be convened by the commissioner of education within sixty (60) days of the passage of this act. At the first meeting the commission shall elect a chair and such other officers as it finds desirable. The commission may meet at such times and places as may seem appropriate, but shall meet in Nashville at least quarterly. Members of the commission shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with the comprehensive state travel regulations.

SECTION 3. The commission is authorized to study the implementation of Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1007, as well as how instruction in character education can be strengthened and enhanced in Tennessee.

SECTION 4. The department of education and the state board of education shall provide necessary staff assistance to the commission, but the commission may also call on other state departments and agencies, including higher education, for information and assistance, and is authorized to secure information from local education agencies on their implementation of Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1007.

SECTION 5. The commission shall report to the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate semiannually on its progress and shall report to the general assembly no later than February 1, 1997. The commission is terminated and shall cease to exist as of July 1, 1997, unless continued by action of the general assembly.

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